

MR. R. J. COLVILLE.

Some history dictated about June 1, 1920 while in Wpg.

Mr. R. J. Colville was born in the city of Quebec on November 14, 1852. His father was a British soldier who served his Queen and Country for twenty-six years. When he was quite young his father's regiment was moved to Niagara on the Lake - ~~was there~~ with his parents. From there they moved to Toronto, then to Kingston, then to Montreal and in 1862 his father's regiment was moved to London, Ontario, where his father received his discharge.

In 1864 he moved to Toronto with his parents where he finished his education in the Toronto Public Schools.

In 1867 he entered the Dry Goods Business in Toronto and was in that business until 1888, when he received a call to become the Assistant Secretary of the Buffalo New York Young Men's Christian Association.

Previous to this he had spent seven years in the west part of Ontario and there organized the first Young Men's Christian Association in the town of Dresden.

Returning to Toronto in 1884, he became actively engaged in church work and taught in the Central Prison Sunday School under the superintendency of Hamilton Cassells.

When Mr. McCullough, the General Secretary of the Toronto Association heard of the call to the Buffalo New York Y.M.C.A., he strongly urged ~~him~~ to accept the Assistant Secretaryship of the Toronto Central Association, and with the earnest solicitation and endorsement of other Toronto men, such as, T.J. Wilkie, and G. B. Meadows, ~~he~~ decided to remain in Toronto and enter Association work there, in September 1888.

In December 1888, Mr. T. S. Cole, Travelling Secretary of the Provincial Committee, asked ~~him~~ to accept the General Secretaryship of the Peterborough Young Men's Christian Association, which at that time was very much in debt and needed much assistance. Mr. McCullough, the General Secretary at Toronto, would not hear of it, but after much negotiation on the part of the Provincial Committee, ~~he~~ was ~~sent~~ ^{loaned} to the Peterborough Association for a period of two weeks to conserve the results of the Hunter & Crosley Evangelistic Meetings held at that time in Peterborough, when a large number, particularly young men, had been lead to Christ. Before ~~he~~ returned to Toronto the Peterborough Association extended a very hearty and unanimous call to become General Secretary which ~~he~~ accepted and entered into the work, May 23rd, 1889.

On entering the work there ~~he~~ realized the great possibility there was for service and with God's blessing we had great spiritual results from our work, although we were in circumscribed quarters having only three rooms ~~to~~ to conduct all our Association activities. On the invitation of one of our Board, ~~he~~ visited Stony Lake, twenty-four miles North of Peterborough, which is now known as the Karwaitha Lakes, and ~~he~~ suggested to the President of the Association, Mr. G. M. Rodgers, the advantage of having a Summer School, which he greatly endorsed and promised his hearty support. After consulting with Mr. Cole, the Provincial Secretary, it was arranged that we would hold a Summer School or District Conference for two weeks on the ~~the~~ beautiful Lakes. It was arranged that Mr. Cole should be the Dean of the School and conduct the Bible Study, and other Associations General Secretaries were to lead the young men present in the Associations history and service. Invitations were sent to the different Associations and at this first Summer School we had delegates from Brockville in the East, to Toronto in

the West. Lindsay, Port Hope and Picton sending large delegations of men. It was a time of real fellowship and beneficial *instruction & inspiration*

The outstanding features of our work in Peterborough were, first - A gracious revival among the young men, and in one year fifty-two accepted Christ and united with the church. Four of these young men volunteered for Foreign Mission work. One of them went to China, two to Africa and one to South America. Dr. William Smart, a brother-in-law of E. R. Wood, now of Toronto, but then of Peterborough, was one of our brightest and best men.

The last outstanding feature, was the fact that we were able to clear off many years indebtedness, and to gain favor with the late Mrs. Nichols, who, in her will, bequeathed to the Peterborough Young Men's Christian Association, the sum of \$20,000.00. She also made this provision, that, *the Executors must disburse the remainder for the* she would be interested in giving further aid and we rejoice to know, that from that estate ~~the~~ Peterborough, ~~the~~ Association has already received between \$65,000.00 and \$75,000.00 and is still receiving aid from that estate.

& growth of the work
As a result of God's favor among us, we were compelled to get larger premises and through the kind co-operation of E. R. Wood with the Honorable George A. Cox, we secured a suite of rooms over two large stores on George Street. *Which* the Honorable Mr. Cox was very generous in fitting up and arranging this suite of rooms to meet the needs of the Association at that time and for five years the Association occupied these premises, and then the new building was erected by the Executors of the Nichols Estate. Unfortunately the *Citizens* of Peterborough were not ~~being~~ called upon to contribute anything towards the arrangement or equipment of this new building.

We were able to secure in Peterborough, *>* Mr. Arthur Jolley, who went in to work as Assistant at Hamilton and afterwards became the first General Secretary of the Galt Y.M.C.A., but whose untimely death cut short a very useful life for the Association.

In 1892 *he* received a call to the West End Young Men's Christian Association of Toronto. This was originally a Railway Association and was organized by Wm. Gooderham who was the President of the credit valley railroad which has now become part of the C. P. R. System. Meetings were held in the waiting room of the Parkdale station and Mr. Gooderham very often led these meetings and in his will left a goodly sum for the extensions of this work. The work grew until the Association had to get larger premises and they rented a store on Queen Street near the Queen Street subway. They remained there until the erection of the new building at the corner of Queen and Dorset Court Road.

of the West End work
In the early days, *was* Mr. W. E. Burford, of sacred memory, particularly, to railroad men, gave his life in service as Secretary. He was succeeded by Alex Weir as General Secretary, and in 1892 I succeeded Mr. Weir. We found on reaching there that ~~there was~~ good work going on among the membership at that time, led by such men *& others* as S. J. Moore and J. E. Foreman, but owing to the collapse of the *building* boom, many men who gave pledges for the building were unable to pay, and, as a result, there was an indebtedness of \$53,000.00 upon the building which hampered the work for many years.

In January 1894 a Provincial Convention was held in the West End Building and John H. Elliott who was the General Secretary of Minneapolis, R. C. Morse of New York, D. A. Budge of Montreal, and other prominent Association workers from the United States and Canada were present. It was an inspiring time for all and put heart into the workers of the Association to push forward and reduce the indebtedness upon their building. At this Convention the Ladies Auxiliaries of Ontario & Quebec held their first Conference under leadership of Mrs. A. B. Alexander Toronto - *Who truly was the Mother of the Ladies Auxiliaries of Canada & U.S. She is now the Honorary President of the West End*

Through the kindness of the Association I was able to attend the Jubilee Convention at London, England, in 1894, and on my return plans were perfected for a Financial Campaign to reduce our indebtedness, which was lead by one of the International Secretaries and resulted in our securing the sum of \$20,000.00 which was of great help to us at that time. *The Ladies Auxiliary gave \$3000 secured by the issue of the Toronto Globe for one day*

The outstanding features of ~~two~~ eight years service in the West End Association were - The discovery of men for Association Work, and, who to-day are leading our Association activities in United States and Canada, ~~such~~ ^{as} Dr. John Brown of New York, Harry Ballantyne, Percy Lee, Will Cook, Will ~~Tait~~ ^{Tait} of Vancouver, Will Green of Edmonton, Chas. Robson formerly of Regina and Dr. James Barton of Toronto.

In 1900 through the urgent request of the International Committee, I accepted the Secretaryship of the Railway Department in Toronto, where I remained until 1908 when at the urgent request of the International and National Committees I was asked to go and organize the railway work in the Lake Superior division of the C. P. R. at Chapleau. This was the beginning of the work for railroad men under the auspices of the C. P. R. The Company erected an equipped building costing over \$35,000.00 at this divisional point, with the understanding that if the Association made good there, they would open up their system for Y.M.C.A. activities among their employees. God wonderfully and ~~graciously~~ ^{graciously} blessed the work there, and at the end of the first year, the three hotels had changed hands and one had gone out of business. The church attendance of men was very marked and the benefit to the railway company so outstanding that the Association got the hearty endorsement from the President down for the work it had accomplished. The President, Mr. G. B. Nicholson, who had been the Chairman from the beginning of the work there, and is now M.P. for that district, said at a public meeting, that the Association had practically turned the town upside down and it was the greatest boon that had ever come to the community. In the railway service, we were able to discover men for the work and E. J. B. Chisholm, now of Schreiber, George F. Brodly of Bridgburg, Allan Bean of Sarnia were induced to give their life to the Association work among these ~~good~~ ^{men}.

In March 1911 I was asked by the International and National Committee to go to St. Thomas for the purpose of reorganizing the work and securing a modern building for that railroad city. God continued to bless the work and within five years we were able to secure a site, erect a building, equip same, and which is one of the most up-to-date buildings in Ontario. One of the results of the organizing of St. Thomas was the securing for Association activities, Joe McCullough, now of Toronto, and Jack Lang, Physical Director of the Halifax Y. M. C. A.

In January 1915 I accepted a call to the Toronto Central Y.M.C.A. as Cashier and Office Secretary. After a year's service a new position was created and I was appointed the first Lobby Secretary at the Central Building, Toronto, where I am still in service.

*Dict. June 1/20
by H. C.*